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Nunn Blasts SALT II Verification Talk

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U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., chided the Carter administration Thursday for making "oversimplified" public statements about American abilities to verify Soviet compliance with terms of the SALT II agreement.

Nunn was critical both of unknown sources who leaked remarks by CIA Director Stansfield Turner and of the Carter administration, although he did not name names.

He said discussions of the U.S. capacity for verifying Soviet compliance have resulted in "oversimplifications" which are "inherently misleading."

Turner was quoted in published reports earlier this week as saying that, because of the loss of U.S. bases in Iran, it might be 1984 before the United States could monitor the Soviet Union to see if the Russians are complying with the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.

On Wednesday, Carter press secretary Jody Powell told reporters that the United States would be able to monitor the Soviets within one year, despite the loss of the Iranian listening posts.

While Nunn said he was "concerned about verification," he was sharply critical of having "public argument" centering on the intelligence capabilities of the United States.

"You really are telling the Soviet Union a great deal... about your future plans," Nunn said.

The SALT treaty is expected to produce a heated fight when the Senate considers ratification, but Nunn said the debate should not be "battled by leaks."

Asked if he agrees that the United States will be able to monitor Soviet compliance within one year, as Powell suggested, Nunn repeated his characterization of such estimates as "oversimplifications."

Nunn held a press conference at the Lockheed-Georgia Co. in Marietta, where he spent close to three hours touring the plant and receiving a briefing on the progress of the company's program to "stretch" 272 C-141 cargo planes.